POLS 2306.003– Introductory Texas Politics
MWF 1:00am – 1:50am
Business Building, Room 158
University of Texas at Tyler
Spring 2014

Professor Eric A. Lopez
Office: BUS 227
Office Phone #: (903) 566-7428
Office Hours: MWF, 2:00pm - 4:00pm & by Appointment
Email: elopez@uttyler.edu (I will only reply to email from an official UT-Tyler email account)

Course Description

Written constitutions define the powers and responsibilities of government while simultaneously establishing the limits of government. To better understand this concept, this course provides an introductory analysis and evaluation of the political systems established by both the U.S. and Texas constitutions. Students will critically examine the ideological and philosophical foundations of both political systems by exploring the historical debates and writings that shaped the formation of these documents. Further, students will examine current events (at both the National and State level) to highlight the applicability and importance of both constitutions in today’s society. The primary goal of this course is for students to have a thorough understanding of the American and Texas political systems from both a historical and contemporary perspective.
Required Texts

2) The Professor, through Blackboard, will post additional readings.

Requirements, Dates, and Grades

*The composition of the student’s final grade will consist of 3 exams and 1 non-cumulative final exam.*

The exams will be held, in class, on the dates specified below. The format of each exam will be detailed during the two class periods prior to the exam, at which point review sessions will also be held. The following are the weights given to the exams and the date each will be held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date (Subject to Change)</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Friday, January 31, 2014</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Friday, March 7, 2014</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>Friday, April 11, 2014</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Friday, May 9, 2014</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
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Final grades will be granted on the following scale: A=100%-90%, B=89%-80%, C=79%-70%, D=69%-60%, and E=59%-50%.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:
http://www2.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Attendance Policy

Your attendance in this course is not mandatory and your grade in this course will not suffer directly from missing class. However, the examination material in this class is not only based on the required readings, but on class participation and class discussions, which means that your grade will almost certainly suffer by missing too many classes. Further, borderline grades will be determined by the quality of your overall contribution to the course.

Class notes, either of my own or transcribed by other students, will be made available to those students whom miss class due to their observance of holidays and special events by organized religions or to students who have a pre-approved absence by the Dean of Students (see also:}
For those students who attend lecture, photography of any class notes/lectures is strictly prohibited. Any student found in violation will be asked to leave class for the day.

“Make Up” Policy

Make up exams will only be offered to those students that have a University approved absence, a doctor’s note detailing your inability to take the exam on the date provided on this syllabus, or a sudden emergency (i.e. death in your family, illness) that prohibits your attendance for the exam on the date provided on this syllabus. Anyone who has not satisfied any of these requirements and does not take the exam will be given a grade of “0.”

If any conflict (others tests, travel plans, etc.) with the exams exists, notify me by January 24, 2014. Be advised that allowances will only be given in extreme cases with my discretion as to what I define as extreme. (see also: Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities and Student Absence due to Religious Observance sections of the syllabus).

Student Absence Due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the Professor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the Professor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the Professor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Policy on Academic Integrity

The UT Tyler community regards cheating as an extremely serious matter and deals severely with those who violate the standards of academic integrity.

Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Copying from another person’s test paper
- During a test, possession of materials not authorized by the person administering the test
• Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination or the divulging of examination contents to another when the Professor has allowed the exam to be kept by the student
• Working with others in taking tests or preparing academic assignments when not authorized by the Professor
• Obtaining by any means another person’s work and submitting that work as one’s own. This includes the downloading of academic papers or the purchase of papers written by others.

If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty, the classroom instructor may ask the student to meet with him or her to discuss the incident. A student may admit to allegations of academic dishonesty, waive the right to a hearing and accept penalties imposed by the instructor. The student may also deny all allegations and ask to see the Dean of Student Affairs. An accused student may accept the decision of the Dean of Student Affairs or ask for a hearing before an impartial hearing officer appointed by the university. Witnesses may be called and evidence presented. The hearing officer will consider all evidence and make a decision. The decision of the hearing officer may be appealed to the President by either the student or the Dean of Student Affairs. For a discussion of possible penalties, please see: http://www.uttyler.edu/mainsite/conduct.html

Class Conduct and Threatening Behavior

Given the nature of political discourse, some of the topics discussed and debated in class may be sensitive to some students. It is expected that students, regardless of the subject matter, maintain civility in their class comments. The University and the Professor seek to promote a safe environment where students may participate in debates, discussion, and other objectives concurrent with the educational process without compromising their health, safety, and welfare. Concurrent with this ideal, mutual courtesy and respect should govern all classroom conduct. Therefore, threats of physical harm or verbal abuse will not be tolerated in this class.

All electronic devices must be silenced during class (if possible, please turn off all electronic devices) unless you have received prior permission from the Professor. Any such device that interrupts class will be confiscated and returned to the student during the Professor’s office hours. ANYONE USING AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION DURING AN EXAMINATION WILL RECEIVE A “0” ON THAT EXAM.

Disability Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including
non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call (903) 566-7079. You may also send an email to: cstaples@uttyler.edu

**Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies**

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at: http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

**The Census Date for this semester is Monday, January 27, 2014.**

**State-Mandated Course Drop Policy**
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (see Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g. via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your Professor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform the Professor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Changes to the Syllabus

The information contained in this syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the Professor.

Course Outline and Readings (subject to change)

Week 1 (January 13 – January 17)

- 1/13 – Introduction to the Course
  - Overview of the course, class policies, and the syllabus
- 1/15, 1/17, 1/22, & 1/24 – The U.S. and Texas Constitutions
  - The Declaration of Independence (Blackboard)
  - Virginia Declaration of Rights (Blackboard)
  - Federalist #’s 10 & 39 (Blackboard)
  - The Constitution of the United States (Blackboard)
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 2
Week 2 (January 20 – January 24)
- 1/20 – NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
- 1/22 & 1/24 – Continue, The U.S. and Texas Constitutions

Week 3 (January 27 – January 31)
- 1/27 – FYI: CENSUS DATE
- 1/27 & 1/29 – Catch-up/Review for Exam 1
- 1/31 – EXAM 1

Week 4 (February 3 – February 7)
- 2/3 & 2/5 – Partisanship
  - Green et al. Chapter 1 (Blackboard)
- 2/7 & 2/10 – Development of Partisanship
  - Campbell et al. Chapter 7 (Blackboard)

Week 5 (February 10 – February 14)
- 2/10 – Continue, Development of Partisanship
- 2/12 & 2/14 – Partisan Perceptions of Public Policy
  - Campbell et al. Chapter 8

Week 6 (February 17 – February 21)
- 2/17 & 2/19 – Voting and Elections in Texas
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 3
- 2/21 & 2/24 – Political Parties in Texas
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 4

Week 7 (February 24 – February 28)
- 2/24 – Continue, Political Parties in Texas
- 2/26 & 2/28 – Interest Groups
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 5

Week 8 (March 3 – March 7)
- 3/3 & 3/5 – Catch-up/Review for Exam 2
- 3/7 – EXAM 2

Week 9 (March 10 – March 14)
- SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS 😊

Week 10 (March 17 – March 21)
- 3/17, 3/19, 3/21, & 3/24 – The Legislature and Legislative Process
  - Maxwell et al. Chapters 6 & 7
  - Federalist #51 (Blackboard)
  - Article 1 of the Constitution (Blackboard)
Week 11 (March 24 – March 28)
- 3/24 – Continue, The Legislature and Legislative Process
- **3/26 - FYI: Last Day to Drop/Withdraw From Classes**
- 3/26, 3/28, 3/31, & 4/2 – The Governor (President) and the Bureaucracy
  - Maxwell et al. Chapters 8 & 9
  - *Federalist # 70* (Blackboard)
  - Article 2 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 12 (March 31 – April 4)
- 3/31 & 4/2 – Continue, The Governor (President) and the Bureaucracy
- 4/2 & 4/4 – The Electoral College
  - Wendland, Jay, Eric Lopez, and Nikkita Edmond. “Moving Beyond Debate and Speculation: The Role of Federalism in Electoral College Reform.” (Blackboard)

Week 13 (April 7 – April 11)
- 4/7 & 4/9 – Catch-up/Review for Exam 3
- **4/11 – EXAM 3**

Week 14 (April 14 – April 18)
- 4/14, 4/16, 4/18, & 4/21 – The Judiciary
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 10
  - *Federalist # 78* (Blackboard)
  - Article 3 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 15 (April 21 – April 25)
- 4/21 – Continue, The Judiciary
- 4/23 & 4/25 – Taxing and Budgeting
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 12

Week 16 (April 28 – May 2)
- 4/28 & 4/30 – Spending and Social Services
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 13
- 4/30 & 5/2 – Local Government
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 14

Final Exam (Friday, May 9)
- 5/9 – Final Exam: 1:30pm – 4:00pm
- Classroom TBD